



## MEDIA FAIRNESS INITIATIVE: A WEEKLY LOOK AT BIAS IN THE NEWS Friday, November 2, 2007



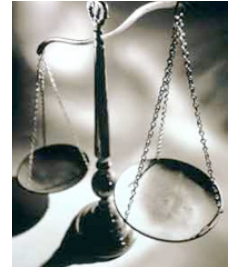
### Democrats Get More Favorable Coverage

Media coverage of Democrat presidential candidates has been far more abundant and favorable than coverage of Republican presidential candidates, according to a study released this week by the Project for Excellence in Journalism and Harvard's Shorenstein Center.

The study, which examined newspapers, network morning and evening broadcasts, cable news shows, talk radio, and major websites during the first five months of 2007, found that **49 percent of all stories involved Democrat candidates, while just 31 percent involved Republican candidates. In addition, Democrat candidates drew more positive stories (35 percent) than Republican candidates (26 percent).**

The discrepancy was even more striking among media that are supposedly held to the highest journalistic standards – newspapers and network newscasts. **Among newspapers, 59 percent of all stories about Democrats had a clear, positive message compared to 11 percent that carried a negative tone. Nearly four in ten evening news stories about Democrats (39.5 percent) were rated as positive, while just 17.1 percent were coded as negative. For Republicans, 37.2 percent of stories were negative, compared to 18.6 percent that were positive.**

**Hillary Clinton drew nearly twice as much media coverage as any Republican candidate.** Overall, 17 percent of stories were about Clinton, followed by Barack Obama (14 percent), Rudy Giuliani (9 percent), John McCain (7 percent), and Mitt Romney (5 percent).



### NY Times Game: Editorial or Hard News?

One of the following excerpts comes from a *New York Times* hard news story and one is from a *New York Times* editorial. Can you guess which one is from the editorial?

1. “For now, the insurance vote stands as the latest example of how Mr. Bush can still get his way on Capitol Hill. Through artful use of veto threats and his veto pen, Mr. Bush has fended off attempts to force a change of course in Iraq — a feat Democrats would never have imagined when they pushed Republicans out of power a year ago. He has twisted Democrats into knots over domestic surveillance, and forced them to rethink a resolution condemning as genocide a century-old massacre of Armenians.”
2. “House Republicans still wanted more. They sought to eliminate all adults from the program, except pregnant women, and to base eligibility on gross income — with no ability to discount spending on child care or other vital needs. The Republicans also wanted to impose arduous documentation requirements to ensure that no illegal immigrants are enrolled, even though there is little or no evidence that any ever have been.”

Answer: #2



### ABC Continues to Cover Good News in Iraq

Breaking from the seemingly continuous negative coverage by the mainstream media, ABC featured a positive story on Iraq for the second week in a row. On October 30, *World News* anchor Charles Gibson introduced a story about improvement in Iraq.

“With violence on a downward trend, Iraqis are learning to adapt, to what might be called a new normal,” Gibson said.

The report went on to describe Baghdad’s largest market as “booming” and mentioned that there hasn’t been an attack there since February.